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F.B.I. TOLD TO YIELD FILES ON INFORMERS

Socialist Workers' Party Seeks 18
Names in \$40 Million Suit—
Court Ruling Is Appealed

By ARNOLD H. LUBASCH

A judge has ruled in unusual secrecy that the Federal Bureau of Investigation must give its files on 18 informers to lawyers for the Socialist Workers' Party.

The decision by Judge Thomas P. Griesa in Federal District Court in Manhattan grew out of the party's \$40 million suit against the bureau and other agencies. The party's lawyers want the files on the informers to see if the Government tried to illegally disrupt the activities of the party for many years.

Judge Griesa's decision to compel the bureau to turn over the files has been stayed to wait for the outcome of the Government's appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The appeals court reserved its decision after hearing arguments yesterday in Manhattan.

Until the arguments were heard in the appeals court, there had been no disclosure of Judge Griesa's decision, which was made in his private chambers more than two months ago. The judge had ordered the transcript of his decision sealed, apparently to maintain as much secrecy as possible about the highly confidential informer files.

Daniel R. Murdock, a Chief Assistant United States Attorney, urged the appeals court to hear the arguments in closed session to prevent the disclosure of any information regarding the informant files. But his request was rejected by Judge Ellsworth A. Van Graafeiland, who presided over the appellate hearing.

1,300 Informants Used

The Government, fighting to preserve the secrecy of the files, contends that it is essential to maintain the confidentiality of informers to protect them from retaliation and harassment. The 18 unidentified informers in the present dispute were reportedly among 1,300 informers used to obtain information about the socialist group.

The party asked for the files of only 18, which it wants selected as a cross-section of the informers who it contends secretly supplied the bureau with information about the party's members and activities.

Leonard B. Boudin, a lawyer for the Socialist Workers' Party, argued before the appeals court that the party was entitled to the files on the informers because the bureau had used the informers as part of an illegal program to disrupt the party's political activities. He called it a "most unusual attempt to destroy a political party."

For 40 years, Mr. Boudin said, the bureau investigated the party without finding it had committed any illegal acts. He said the investigation was designed to combat the party's political positions, not to enforce the law.

The party filed its suit four years ago in an effort to get a permanent injunction to prohibit what it said was the Government's use of informers, burglaries and surveillance. Last year, while court hearings were continuing in the case, the Government announced that it was ending the investigation of the party.

The Socialist Workers continued the court case for an injunction and as well as the millions of dollars in damages. Judge Griesa issued a series of orders to uncover information about the Government's activities against the Socialist Workers, a left-wing group that says it has 2,500 active members.

Under the court-ordered discovery procedures, the Government turned over more than 30,000 pages of documents from the files of several agencies, including material disclosing that the bureau had burglarized the Manhattan offices of the Socialist Workers' Party more than 90 times from 1960 to 1966.

The Government also turned over the files on seven informers whose identities had become publicly known, including the file on Timothy Redfearn, identified as a bureau informer who burglarized the Denver offices of the party last year.

However, the Government has vigorously resisted the party's efforts to obtain the files on additional informers, who have not been identified. A trial date for the suit has been delayed indefinitely as the party's lawyers seek to discover evidence of the Government's activities against it.